THE LIFE AND WORKS OF NAHUM TATE

A Portion of

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE BOARD OF UNIVERSITY STUDIES OF THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY IN CONFORMITY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

1932

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HERBERT FRANCIS SCOTT-THOMAS

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SUMMARY

Nahum Tate, the son of an Irish family, members of the Church of England but Puritan in their religious preferences, was born and educated in Ireland. He was a man of simple tastes and modest abilities, who inherited the predominantly sentimental and extra-rational moral and religious attitude of his ancestors towards life. He seems to have been lacking in physical vitality, from childhood. He was gentle and scholarly in his pursuits, he loved the country, and sustained life patiently and perseveringly. His first volume of poems, published some years after his arrival in London, indicates that a mildly emotional lyrical vein came most naturally to him; but poverty compelled him to adopt more popular, though less congenial, literary modes, and thrust him into the strenuous and highly sophisticated life of the Capital. Frustrated longings and time-serving smothered both hope and ambition, and put in their places melancholy, pessimism, and mild bitterness. Historically, therefore, Tate was definitely out of harmony with the spirit of his own generation, though he catered to fashionable tastes for a mere livelihood.

His early poems are said to have attracted the attention of Dryden, who may have given him literary connections in London and shown him how to meet popular requirements. His first effort centered around two original heroic tragedies, *Brutus of Alba* and *The Loyal General*, both unsuccessful in the theatre. The popularity of Ravenscroft turned him to farce, in which he scored a real victory with an adaptation of Sir Aston Cokayn's *Trapolin creduto Principe*, an adaptation which was produced at intervals throughout the eighteenth century. *Cuckold's Haven*, an adaptation and contamination of two plays by Ben Jonson, was a failure. Shakespeare and Beaumont and Fletcher, the other Elizabethan and post-Elizabethan darlings of the Restoration, next claimed his attention. His adaptation of *Richard II* was suppressed because of its occasional significance; *Coriolanus* seems to have been a failure; but in *Lear* he achieved his greatest dramatic triumph, his version having supplanted Shakespeare's, holding the boards without a serious challenge for a hundred and fifty years. His last play, *Injur'd Love* (1707), an adaptation of

Webster's *White Devil*, never produced, reflects Tate's sentimental interest in morality. He had already advanced his own theory of the reform of the stage, in sympathy with Collier.

Tate's popular work for the theatre was supplanted by a variety of literary enterprises, equally popular and journalistic in character. He edited the *Monitor*, a tri-weekly sheet of overcharged religious poetry, in which the debased influence of Milton is quite definitely marked; Sir John Davies's *Nosce Teipsum*; a prose miscellany of historical and scientific interest; and various poems. In harmony with the spirit of the age, he made translations of selections from the Classics, rather feeble and diffuse in character, and supplemented these with his own rendering in English of French publications and modern works in Latin. He met the popular taste for character sketches with a work in which his debt to Hall is obvious. In collaboration with Doctor Brady he made a paraphrase of the *Psalms* for use in the parish Churches. Satire was always foreign to Tate, but he collaborated with Dryden in the Second Part of *Absolom and Achitophel.* The vogue for the Prologue was exploited in a number of Prologues and Epilogues. This undesirable attitude in a man of letters, necessary though it may have been in Tate's case, was only aggravated by the acquisition of the Laurel, with the accompanying demand for occasional poems. Tate, moreover, held that the Laureate was an official teacher of morals, and introduced his sentimental emotions whenever possible. Of his non-occasional work during this period *A Present for the Ladies* is interesting in that it combines a benevolent and sentimental tone with scientific method. To all this activity, his earliest poems, original pastorals, hortatory, religious, moral, and meditative compositions, and pure lyrics, moderately natural and romantic in character, form a pleasant contrast.

Accordingly, Tate belongs to the group of Restoration writers, who while standing comparatively in the background, really follow immediately in the succession of such men as Milton and Bunyan, and so move in the direct current of English Literature, drawing their inspiration from the days of Elizabeth, and even more definitely pointing the way to those intangible movements of the eighteenth century which were to culminate in the Romantic outburst.

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NAHUM TATE AND THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

By H. F. Scott-Thomas

The Restoration contains an appreciable quantity of literary expressions irreducible to the dominant forces at work in the epoch. . . . The Restoration is unable to forget the Renaissance. Not only does it preserve in its innermost self this subconscious remembrance, but it also possesses the other's creative faculties in a latent state, inhibited but always ready to reawaken; and under one form or another, through the artistic expressions of the moment, this secret quality allows itself to be seen or divined.[1]

The work of the Laureate, Nahum Tate, was the product of this quality. He stands, Janus-like, with one face turned towards the past and the other looking to the future. Psychologically, he was entirely out of sympathy with the popular modes. Limited intellectual power put rationalism, neo-classical ideals, and the new scientific method almost entirely beyond his reach, and left him bathing himself in the tepid waters of his own equally limited emotions. Indeed, it is into bourgeois conscientiousness, sentimental virtue, and ready "sensibility," such as his, that the eighteenth century struck its roots and first drew feeble warmth and thin nutriment for the earliest indications of the recrudescence of Elizabethan spirit which was to flower in the Romantic movement, a century later. Yet Tate constantly strove to tickle the palates of his own generation with the fare to which they had become inured. The exigencies, first of his economic situation, and then of his official post, compelled him to grapple with materials and modes which were far beyond his strength, and which were utterly distasteful to him, in an unceasing effort to wring from their stubborn fibres a bare sustenance; and only a death in the Mint [2] released him at length from the dreary struggle. It is to this effort that the superficial, occasional, and generally journalistic character of his work is to be attributed, as well as the all-pervading atmosphere of relaxation and lassitude which hangs over it like a dark cloud.

[1] Cazamian, *A History of English Literature,* New York, 1928, 2. 8.
[2] *Notes and Queries,* Fifth Series, 11. 100.

Two additional circumstances aggravated the situation: Tate was a man of congenital weakness of constitution,[3] which probably left him tired at the start; and he was an Irishman,[4] to whose natural, racial sentimentality and emotionalism all that smacked of the cold, cynical realism of the Restoration must have been particularly discouraging and repellent.

Tate's relation to his period will be rendered the more intelligible if the main tendencies of the era are examined in turn, and duly associated with him. The first of these is neo-classical. With the passing of all the fine careless rapture of the Renaissance, the exhaustion of the inventive faculty, and the satiety of the imagination and of the emotions, a longing had arisen for the equilibrium, rest, peace, tranquillity, and precision which only law and order could give. A suitable and satisfactory code had been found in the literature and culture of the ancient worlds, and behind the massive shoulders of Ben Jonson, an important faction in the English realm of culture had begun to move toward the neo-classical goal.

The march was accelerated, though not inaugurated or directed, by French influence. France had emerged from the Thirty Years' War with the hegemony of Europe in her grasp. She was one. Richelieu and Mazarin had crushed Protestantism at home, even while supporting it abroad, and had established a strong central government. A similar organization shaped the course of the national literature. The Pléiade had promulgated a definite code, and in 1635 the Academy had been organized under Richelieu. France had gone over to classicism under Molière and Boileau.

Even before the civil war, England had felt the influence of France. The French marriage of Charles I and the fondness of the Cavaliers for Gallic manners and customs had drawn the two kingdoms together. Now, the English King and his nobility had lived at the French court, and had returned more strongly imbued with the French influence than would have been possible had the Channel always flowed between them. The Restoration, therefore, represents no sharp break with the

[3] In the preface to his *A Poem upon Tea,* 1702, p. [8], Tate writes: ". . . I must honestly acknowledge, 'tis to This (despicable) Tea-Leaf that I owe Recovery out of a weakly Constitution from the very Cradle. . . ."

[4] *Biographia Dramatica,* 1812, 1. 2. 703.

past, but rather a quickening under the French stimulus, of movements, English in their origin, but analogous to similar movements on the continent. Even without the Restoration, England must have moved, eventually, toward neo-classicism.

The whole movement was based upon a theory, and looked toward an ideal, both entirely external and objective. It was the calm, tranquil, open-eyed attitude toward life, which refused to allow itself to be hurried or to become irritated or confused by ambition, contradiction, or complexity; It was the balanced, practical, realistic simplicity of matter and of form, that fascinated an age whose eager, ambitious idealism, nascent imagination, and tingling emotions had brought only confusion, bitterness, and repletion. In short, it was an even proportion, a regular organization, a perfection of form, which came to be the ideal of the neo-classical group.

All that was strange, unusual, singular, particular, or exotic, apart from the accepted extravagances of a few *genres* like the heroic tragedy, all that could not be brought into harmony with the whole, or catalogued and classified according to rule, law, and precedent, was to be viewed with distrust, if not with actual dislike and contempt. Conformity, regularity, convention, rule, and discipline, were to be observed and followed. Elegance and deftness were highly esteemed.

Rule, law, and precedent could be found and examined in the works of the ancients, Aristotle, Horace, and a host of lesser lights. These ancients were the rule, law, and order, more remotely, of a sovereign and inviolable code, the code of nature; and more immediately, of the French exponents of classicism, Boileau, Molière, Corneille, and Racine. It was unnecessary to appeal from the ancients, however. They had rendered the laws of nature accessible and intelligible. They had done their work better than the French exponents of classicism. Indeed, so perfectly had they wrought, that to follow them was to follow nature, and never again would it be either necessary or possible for others to perform the same task. It was perfect, complete, final.

To attain to the ideal with any measure of perfection was always quite beyond the comparatively muddled mind of an Englishmen, so incurably Gothic in its very timbre; but the national taste could move in the desired direction, as the Res-

toration and post-Restoration periods were to show. Accordingly, the group were closely intent upon organization; and after them came Tate, hobbling along, handicapped by his natural limitations and his Irish birth and education, striving to do what they were striving to do, the shadow of shadows.

Throughout his dramatic works [5] he has observed, at least formally, the unities of time and of place, his most marked failure, apart from his Shakespearean adaptations, being in *Injur'd Love*, where his feeble powers made it impossible for him to mould Webster's firmer and more twisted material along the desired lines.[6] Unity of action was always beyond his grasp, just as it is almost always beyond the grasp of any Englishmen. Yet he strove for it in his own vague and indirect way by processes of consolidation and compression, and in some instances by a more direct motivation. To this circumstantial evidence must be added his formal statement in the preface to *King Lear*: "I found the whole . . . a Heap of Jewels, unstrung and unpolisht. . . . 'Twas my good Fortune to light on one Expedient to rectifie what was wanting in the Regularity and Probability of the Tale. . . ." He had laid hold of the classical and neo-classical ideas of organization, even if he had not the strength or genius to give them a more complete and successful application.

To the neo-classical vogue must be ascribed also the polish and regularity of his versification. It is true that in his early plays, following in the steps of Dryden, who in *All for Love* (1677) had abandoned the rhymed couplet, he too sets aside rhyme; but his verse is done consistently with regularity and precision.[7] Such regularity and precision did not come natur-

[5] Tate wrote nine plays: *Brutus of Alba*, 1678; *The Loyal General*, 1680; *The History of King Lear*, 1681; *The History of King Richard the Second*, produced 1680, printed 1681; *The Ingratitude of a Commonwealth, or Coriolanus*, 1682; *A Duke and No Duke*, produced 1684, published 1685; *Cuckolds-Haven*, 1685; *The Island Princess*, 1687; *Injur'd Love*, 1707.

[6] *Injur'd Love* is an adaptation of Webster's *White Devil*. See Professor Spencer's article in this issue.

[7] For example (*The Loyal General*, 1. 1, p. 3):

> Could I give Being to a thing so Tame!
> Rouse, rouse, thyself, Edraste, nor permit
> My active Blood to freeze within thy Veins;
> If thou want'st Heat, come, to my Bosom fly,
> For I have yet enough of Warmth to spare.

ally to the man; yet he felt the demand for it, and strove by various devices to attain it, at least formally. Between the years 1677 and 1684, moreover, he was moving steadily towards greater regularity in his poems,[8] and after 1684 his homage to the couplet is almost unbroken, the official occasional poems presenting, except for an odd "Pindaric" ode, an almost unvaried succession of rhymed pentameters. That his heart never was in it, however, is obvious. The early diversified lyrics are, undoubtedly, what came more naturally to him.

(*Ibid.*, 2. 1, p. 11):

> What, mar these eyes with Penitential Tears,
> Fond Youth? They have too much of fire to weep.
> Their glances cou'd Create a Day in Cells,
> And kindle freezing Hermits into Dalliance.

(*Ibid.*, 3. 6, p. 31):

> I'll make those Mansions fairer than those Bow'rs
> And in a Scene of thought repeat these Joys,
> So oft within these rev'ling Shades Possesst.
> See there thy rival, King, how lovelier far
> In Death than thou are Breathing? Fear him still,
> Be jealous of his Memory, and live
> Till ev'ry Subject scorns thee as I do,
> And Vermine like o'r-leap their Wooden King.
> State, Tempests, shake thee into Dust—Fates catch
> My Curse, and stamp it in their brazen Volumns.

[8] *Cf. Poems*, First edition, 1677, and Second edition enlarged, 1684. The devices are numerous by which this desire for regularity is wrought out:

I. The length of the line is changed:

A. Long lines are often shortened:

1677 That Rings *my Own*, or dearer Friends untimely Knell (p. 2).
1684 That Rings my dearest *Friends* untimely Knell (p. 7).

B. Sometimes a very long line may even be divided into two lines:

1677 But now, forgetful of thy high Descent, meanly thou labour'st to foment . . . (p. 14).
1684 But now forgetful of thy Bright Descent,
Thy prostituted Pains foment,
And feed the Vices of the Age . . . (p. 17).

C. A short line is lengthened:

1677 Ev'n *Hurricanes* abroad are found . . . (p. 3).
1684 From Hurricanes abroad less harm is found . . . (p. 7).
1677 To guild thy Theam . . . (p. 11).
1684 To guild the darkest Theam . . . (p. 14).

D. Rarely, short lines may be combined into a long line:

1677 Th' Enormities
Of these Apostate votaries
But them and their Confæd'rates too, with signal Rage pursu'd (p. 18).
1684 But with a signal Rage their Crimes pursu'd . . . (p. 20).

Neo-classical "good taste" is evident in his selection of words. Indeed, part of the ludicrous effect of his and Brady's renditions of the Psalms [9] may be traced to the very precision and aptness with which they have chosen their language, such precision and aptness giving an effect of superficial sprightliness and dexterity wholly out of harmony with the dignity and strength of the originals. There is direct evidence, too. Turning again the leaves of the introduction to *Lear,* one comes upon Tate's formal assertion:

> I have one thing more to apologize for, which is that I have us'd less Quaintness of Expression even in the Newest Parts of the Play. I confess, 'twas Design in me, partly to comply with my Author's Style, to make the Scenes of a Piece, and partly to give it some Resemblance of the Time and Persons here Represented.

In organization, language, and style, therefore, Tate felt and responded to the neo-classical stimulus. It was always unnatural to him, however, and though he practised the tenets with some degree of formal success, his heart never moved with his hand, and he never succeeded in acquitting himself with ease, spontaneity, or brilliance.

Closely allied to neo-classicism, but broader in its scope, was the rationalistic movement. Indeed, in so far as neo-classicism is fundamentally the application to the realm of fine art of the principles of science which are inviolable because they are

II. There are changes within the line:
  A. Words are often changed in order to do away with hypermetrical syllables:
    1677 And act thy Miseries o're agen . . . (p. 5).
    1684 And act thy Troubles o'er agen . . . (p. 8).
    1677 Th' Unfortunate Man, whom any *Muse* befriends (p. 18).
    1684 The wretched Man, whom any *Muse* befriends (p. 20).
  B. Changes in vocabulary are sometimes made to regularize stress:
    1677 Which the *offending Pair* did frame . . . (p. 13).
    1684 The first offending Pair did frame . . . (p. 16).
    1677 By the important Labours of Mankind . . . (p. 20).
    1684 By never-ceasing Labours of man-kind . . . (p. 21).
  C. Occasionally, merely the order of the words is altered for the sake of smoothness:
    1677 Is *Folly,* not to be forgiv'n, in ev'n thy *Doating Age* (p. 5).
    1684 Is *Folly,* not to be forgiv'n, ev'n in thy *doating Age* (p. 8).

[9] [Brady and Tate] tr. and ed., *An Essay of a New Version of the Psalms of David,* 1695.

" nature's," the whole movement may be regarded as essentially only one phase of the general vogue of rationalism which was sweeping over England and permeating the life of the nation in all its various aspects. Rationalism disliked extravagance, imagination, fancy, and emotionalism. It sought order, simplicity, and the universal assent of common intelligence. In short, it did for manners, philosophy, religion, and all else, what neo-classicism was doing for esthetics. It had this, also, in common with neo-classicism: both were based upon a final authority. Here, however, there was a sharp difference; for neo-classicism was founded upon a sanction which was, immediately at least, external and objective, while the rationalist's criterion was internal and subjective, that portion of the intellect which was marked by its very sanity as common to, and equal in, all men. The two could be merged, therefore, rationalism being in a certain sense the potential activity of a faculty, and neo-classicism a code, a channel, into which rational performance might be directed, as, indeed, it came to be directed in such a man as Pope. Such merging was, of course, facilitated and expedited by the fact that both neo-classicism and rationalism were inherently " primitive " and universal in their character. Neo-classicism looked back to a time when men's minds had been unclouded by all the anxieties and perplexities which had arisen with the development of new and different theories and manners in the realm of art and literature; and rationalism strove to regain a position such as it had when the clear light of reason had burnt brightly within the brain of primitive men, before a confused philosophy and theology had half-choked intellectual interpretation, control, and direction.

Historically, Restoration rationalism took its rise in the Renaissance rebellion against scholasticism. Bacon had mapped out the program. But no one had risen to succeed Bacon, and English rationalists had turned aside to examine the manner and nature of Descartes' work before coming under the more congenial direction of Thomas Hobbes. Hobbes had applied the rational faculty to philosophy, theology, and manners, in a radically empirical, and therefore characteristically English, manner. Rationalism languished under the reactionary and pre-Baconian thought of the Puritan tyranny, but

blossomed anew, naturally, under the benign rays of the Restoration.

To follow the movement further into all its ramifications and the reactions which it engendered, is clearly beyond the scope of this article; moreover, it was almost entirely beyond the scope of Tate. Pyrrhonism, the Platonism of Cambridge, deism, libertine naturalism, empiricism, and all the other rationalistic and semi-rationalistic movements of the age in their formal and technical aspects left him undisturbed. He was incapable of appreciating them or of modifying his conduct materially under the influence of their rational validity. It was impossible for him to remain completely unaffected, however, and to such traces of the rationalistic method I now turn.

On the positive side, rationalistic method centres about three separate foci. I have said that Tate's whole attitude toward the drama was determined by neo-classical modes. It should now be evident that such an attitude is essentially, if more remotely, rationalistic. To support this general statement we may cite the " happy " ending of *Lear*. Rationalism was held to entail poetic justice. Tate also applied, in a feeble and child-like manner, the rationalistic method to morality. He inveighs against profanity. Why? Because, if there be a God, it is not rational for a mere man to invoke him carelessly; and if there be no God, the whole thing is senseless. Similarly, gambling is rejected because it, too, is irrational, though here there is also a trace of the utilitarian ethics of Locke: If you lose at gaming, it is not sensible to deprive yourself thus; if you win, it is only a matter of time until you lose and are back at the original starting point; and if you do not lose in the second instance, you have simply deprived another of what he ought to have and requires.[10] And so on. Finally, Tate's attitude towards

[10] *The Monitor*, 1713, nos. 1-21.
For example (" The Swearer," no. 4, p. 1):

> But He that Practises this Odious Vice
> Sells for an empty Sound his Paradise.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> If he believes a God, how void of Sense
> Are Pigmies to defy Omnipotence?
> If not, Himself an Idiot he proclaims
> Who Swears by Pow'rs that are but any Names.

religion is a rationalistic one. Theoretically, it makes him broadly tolerant, with a cosmopolitanism that is fundamentally rationalistic. Religious differences must be respected, but only that they may be compounded by a rationalistic appeal to common sense, which is first to be stimulated and then convinced.[11] It must not be imagined that Tate ever was willing to compromise "orthodox" doctrine.[12] He was merely prepared to be patient until the intelligence of men could be convinced of the reasonableness of Christianity. Once again we hear the echo of the foot-steps of Locke.

On the negative side, Tate's antipathy to atheism on the one hand, and to libertine naturalism on the other, both logical outcomes of a fearless and thoroughgoing application of the rationalistic method to life, brought him into violent opposition to these extreme forms of rationalism. He employs against them the "orthodox" rationalistic method, combined with, once again, the utilitarian ethics of Locke. Atheism is denounced because it is not sensible, but also because it proves of

[11] *A Pastoral Dialogue,* 1690, p. 17:

> Brand such as wou'd to Truth reveal'd agree,
> But Penalties on such as cannot see
> What others can, is Breach of Charity.
> Had Charity in Synods interpos'd,
> The Seamless Garments Breach had soon been clos'd.

Ibid., p. 14:

> . . . first you must convince the Reason's Light,
> That They *mistake,* and You are in the right:
> Where you mistake, and They the Truth may hit,
> Will you to your own Rule of Force submit?
> You'll plead the Privilege They urg'd before,
> Conviction crave, and They demand no more.
> Conviction clear the Soul can only win;
> With Club or Hammer try to force the Pin,
> The Brains you may beat out, ne'r drive the Notion in.

[12] *Ibid.,* p. [2] of the Preface:

"There is no Man that has a greater Veneration for the Sacred Function and Order, or the Discipline and Worship by Law establish'd; neither does the Passive Principle itself, that has so nearly endanger'd the Shipwreck both of State and Church, derive its Source from the pure Fountain of our Reformation: 'Twas a new-sprouted Tail of the Dragon, that swept many of our Stars, tho' but few of the First Magnitude; most whereof recover'd themselves as soon as they were sensible of the Consequence. . . ."

no practical utility in the face of the early physical disintegration of death.[13]

Such is Tate's connection with rationalism. It is easily exaggerated. The method is often rationalistic or semi-rationalistic, but it is clear that the attitude never is. It is, rather, the attitude of vulgar and bourgeois middle-class morality and Christian " orthodoxy," modified by an unedifying utilitarian ethic, which employs the rationalistic method for its own ends.

A third movement of the period is the growth of the scientific spirit. Like neo-classicism, this development has much in common with rationalism, being in some measure the application of the rationalistic principle within the realm of objective phenomena. It takes its departure from both neo-classicism and rationalism, however, in that it does not seek for a single, final authority. Its method is experimential and inductive, Socratic rather than Aristotelian. The fundamental assumption is that sense errs, so that the end sought becomes a principle which will compound all former mistakes and weaknesses. Doubt becomes a necessity, and a pessimistic emphasis upon the weaknesses of men a duty. Science is divorced from rationalism and seems to join hands with scepticism. There is this difference, however: with the sceptic, agnosticism is the result of his effort; with the scientist, it is the beginning. With the scientist, confessed ignorance is the required antecedent condition of a subsequent degree of certainty. Moreover, the scientist holds the positivistic and optimistic belief that sense can be corrected and strengthened. The mind must first be cleared of all earlier errors and prejudices of sense, to prepare the way for natural experiment and accurate observation. Such a complete expung-

[13] " The Mid-Night Thought," in *Poems,* 2nd ed., 1684, lines 13-7, 29-32, 37-8, pp. 101-3 :

> How long since I did meditate
> Of Life, of Death, and future State ?
> Approaching Fate his Pace will keep,
> Let Mortals watch, or let them sleep.
> What Sound is that ? — a Passing Bell ! . . .
>
> Now, wakened Conscience, speaks at large,
> And envious Friends enhance the Charge !
> Let the bold Atheist now draw near,
> And try the drooping Heart to chear; . . .
>
> Who hopes for Rescue here, will fail,
> And the grim Serjeant takes no Bail.

ing is, of course, neither possible nor desirable; but it was held to be both, even by such men as Descartes, Bacon, and Boyle. A science of causes thus becomes practically impossible, the scientist seeking only to observe and to record the course and result of experiment, and from such observation to arrive at plausible hypotheses.

Quite obviously, it would be a work of supererogation to follow up the scientific development into all its ramification of Cartesian and Baconian method and psychology. It is evident that with such developments, Tate had but slight formal connections. His most direct contact is through the little scientific and pseudo-scientific miscellany which he edited,[14] and this is supplemented by his translation of Cowley's Latin botanical poem,[15] which introduces him to the science of plants. The Latin poem of Frascatorius on syphilis [16] gives him some insight into the history of venereal disease and its current materia medica. What is more important is the future Laureate's response to the scientific spirit and his occasional adoption of the scientific method.

It is clear that the employment of neo-classical and rationalistic criteria is, in itself, a modified scientific process. These two are based upon the application of general formulae and common hypotheses such as it is the purpose of the scientist to establish. In addition to these, however, Tate's consistently applied taste for collecting and for convenient epitome is basically experimential and scientific. There are occasions, moreover, when he goes even farther and attempts a systematic application of the scientific method, followed by regular estimation and interpretation. The most sustained example occurs in the prose work, *A Present For the Ladies.*[17] Here Tate begins with a preconceived thesis, and is, accordingly, thus far unscientific. But once the thesis is set aside, the method becomes essentially one of empirical example and careful obser-

[14] J. D., *A Memorial for the Learned; or Miscellany of choice collections from the most eminent authors,* 1686.

[15] "The Book of Plants, General Int. and Dedication to Charles, Duke of Somerset by Tate; Book 4, Of Flowers and Book 5, Of Trees tr. by Tate," in *The Poetical Works of Cowley,* Edinburgh, 1777.

[16] Tate, tr., "Syphilis," in *Examen Poeticum,* ed. John Dryden, 1693, p. [469].

[17] Tate, *A Present For the Ladies; Being an Historical Vindication of the Female Sex,* 1692.

vation, the conclusions proving to be identical with the presupposed thesis. It must be confessed that the selection of examples is not unprejudiced, nor are the observation and interpretation accurate or intelligent, but these are secondary considerations. Primarly the method is scientific.

A less prejudiced application is to be observed in the life of Horace and the analysis of the prosody of the *Carmina*. Here Tate's method is properly scientific. He presents us with an early bit of research carefully executed. The biographical section is thoughtfully built up, each statement emerging from definite statements by the Latin poet himself, culled directly from the poems. The discussion of the prosody is clear, deliberate, systematic, and equally experimential. Tate never was a scientist in any real sense of the word; but he understood, and was not averse to, scientific method. On occasion he could apply it, although only to comparatively superficial material, with a considerable degree of thoroughness and success.

Tate's prose style was fused in a scientific furnace. This was the age which developed the modern mode, vigorous and nonrhetorical. Rational inquiry of the early Renaissance had found prevailing styles inadequate, and had supplemented the Ciceronian cult and the manner of the Greek orator with the more satisfactory medium of "Attic prose," founded upon the literary monuments of the silver age of ancient literature. In time, however, both "curt" and "loose" styles had run to seed in ornament and wit. The Ciceronian manner had persisted throughout the seventeenth century, but the Attic development had stimulated a close criticism of it. The struggle was against obscurity.

In England the cry became more compelling after the Restoration. Scientific complaint of the inadequacy of both styles was met by scholastic emphasis upon form. Science demanded simplicity in vocabulary and mathematical accuracy of arrangement. It is easy to stress the scientific protest too highly, however. Dissatisfaction was rife outside scientific circles, and scientists themselves recognized that a close mathematical manner could be required in science and philosophy alone. The racial idea of the *honnête homme* strove against a style which manifestly had been developed for the Court. Boyle thought it proper for a gentleman to write and speak plainly, though dif-

ferently from a scientist. Sermonizing had its effects, too. The enthusiastic excesses of Dissent provoked a more controlled manner in the Establishment, but the Establishment, in its turn, was moved by Dissent to ways, plain, practical, and affectionate. Commerce made its demands for brevity and simplicity; but most important of all was the complete change in literary taste, in harmony with the Augustan spirit of the age and its stress upon the regularity and uniformity of nature.

It was in the midst of these demands, cultural, ecclesiastical, rational and practical and therefore scientific, that Tate's prose style was forged. The result was terse, plain, and unaffected. He seldom writes at length. His sentences are consistently brief. His arrangement is straightforward and logical, and his selection of words, simple, adequate, and familiar.

Tate's immediate connection with the scientific movement, then, was small; but indirectly, he owed much to its attitude, outlook, and method, which frequently modified and shaped his work.

With neo-classicism, rationalism, and science, therefore, Tate had formally but slight contacts. It is when we turn to tendencies less severely logical and intellectual that we find him more closely subjoined. The moral trend of the period could claim him as one of its own. It is true that it had its rationalistic aspects, in that rationalism held that sound morality was based upon good sense, and in that morality, up to a point, employed the rationalistic method; but morality was not satisfied to remain merely within the limits of the intellect, and once outside these limits, it became essentially passionate or emotional, and, accordingly, irrational. With the progressive drying up of the springs of the emotions beneath the ascending sun of the Restoration, emphasis was laid more and more upon ethics and morality. In the smartest and most brilliant circles, religious enthusiasm and sentiment died, and in their places came moral dialectic and ethical discussion. That was as far as the sprightly and disillusioned members of those circles could go. Moralists had always been numerous, but now expression began to be clear, pleasant, and elegant. What had been consistently marked by the heavy seal of scholasticism and Church teaching, and shaped by tradition and orthodoxy, now became the legitimate and common possession of all edu-

cated people. It was out of such discussion that the generally accepted dictum emerged that poetry should have at its heart a moral. There was a classical precedent for it, and in this way morality and neo-classicism were drawn closely together. Aristotle had said that poetry should present phenomena not as they are but as they ought to be. For this reason he had held poetical fiction greater than historical truth. It could be more easily moulded, and in a philosophic sense, it was even truer than history; for it could be given a more general significance and a wider application. Moreover, through the potential novelty of fiction, a pleasure could be added to literature, impossible to the mere recording of temporal fact. The sequence was normal and logical. Without a fable, there could be no epic or tragedy, and without a potential moral application, there could be no fable. Once this point had been attained, it took but a moment for less carefully-balanced and hard-headed individuals to take the final step pointed out by emotion and sentiment and to insist, as Dennis came to insist, that all great poetry must be religious. With such a theory and with such a position Tate was bound to be in sympathy, and the stupendous achievement of Milton overshadowing the more characteristic work of the period was an inexhaustible treasure-house of illustration and argument.

That Tate *was* influenced by Milton has already been demonstrated by Professor Havens, and it is now possible to supplement Professor Havens's material with additional citations. Most significant is a poem published in 1691 and entitled "A Poem Occasioned by the late Discontents & Disturbances in the State. with Reflections upon the Rise and Progress of Priest-craft . . ." Here, "Lycidas," which up to this time had made scarcely any impression on English literature, is the work that Tate has in mind. The ecclesiastical situation in which he wrote was not basically different from that in which Milton had found himself fifty-four years before. Milton had found the clergy idle, indifferent, and dissipated; Tate thought that he found them stubborn, malicious, treacherous. The recent settlement under William had left many knotty problems unsolved. Not the least formidable of these was the difficulty of the non-juring High Churchmen who, having taken an oath of allegiance to the House of Stuart, now declared them-

selves unable conscientiously to take a similar pledge to the House of Nassau, and were even ready for the return of James from the continent. Tate inveighs in the preface against this faction in a manner which smacks strongly of the splendid outbursts and sweeping prose denunciations of the outraged Milton:

. . . After so happy and wonderful a Revolution as we have seen, when our Hopes were grown desperate, and our Liberty reduc'd to its very last gasp. to have the only Remedy in Nature so effectually apply'd, so Miraculous a Recovery perform'd; after all this to find Englishmen, and such as pretend to no other Interest or Religion but That of their Country; to find Them expressing Dissatisfaction, everywhere Busie in sowing Dissension, obstructing, as far as in them lies, the Progress of Affairs, and unhinging the present Settlement (upon which alone depends the Safety of these Nations, and common Quiet of Europe) . . . .

In tracing the Occasions of the late Disturbances and Discontents of the State, I was unwillingly brought within the Verge of the Church. There is no Man that has a greater Veneration for the Sacred Function and Order or the Discipline and Worship by Law establish'd; neither does the Passive Principle itself, that has so nearly endanger'd the Shipwreck both of State and Church; derive its Source from the pure Foutnain of our Reformation: 'Twas a new-sprouted Tail of the Dragon, that swept many of our Stars, tho' but few of the First Magnitude; most whereof recover'd themselves as soon as they were sensible of the Consequence . . . .

There is no Person so obscure or inconsiderable but might have observed our most zealous Protestants, both Church-men and Dissenters, to have been all along Properties to the common Enemy; so visible have been the Triumphs and Insultings of Roman Emissaries upon the Animosities they have sown amongst us, and of which they reckon'd shortly to reap the Harvest.

After the manner of "Lycidas," the poem, itself, as the complete title indicates, is cast in the pastoral mould. The usual pastoral dialogue is carried on between two shepherds, Palæmon and Philander. The national life during the period of Roman domination in the Church is described thus (p. 4):

> The vile Remembrance we can scarce support,
> How Vermin to our Palace did resort,
> And Nations purg'd their Scum into our Court.
> The Rogue was qualify'd for Magistrate,
> Tribunals then were Shambles of the State.

Of course, in 1691, the whole history of the trouble may be traced to the one and only possible source, Rome; and it is in this passage that Tate shows most definitely his debt to Milton. For purposes of convenient comparison Milton's lines may be set down too:

Tate	Milton
Mark the whole Chain of Publick Woes, you'll find	
The last Link still to the Priest's Girdle join'd.	
Pan prosper me, as I the Function hold	
Most Sacred, and the Watchman of the Fold;	
But hate the Shepherds who their Labour spare,	Of other care they little reckoning make,
To Hirelings leave their Flocks, their only Care	Than how to scramble at the shearer's feast,
To call at Sheering-time for an ungodly Share	And shove away the worthy bidden guest; . . .
Fleece-worn, and with an Amaryllis sped,	To sport with Amaryllis in the shade, . . .
They Pipe and Feast, and jocund Measures tread,	
	What recks them? What need they? They are sped;
	And when they list, their lean and flashy songs
	Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw;
While their lean Sheep look up, and are not fed.	The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed, . . .
Nor care which way, make but the stipend large,	Enow of such, as for their bellie's sake
Through Door or Breach they climb into the Charge.	Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold? . . .
Profit with them is Grace's loudest Call;	
Preferment's Sacred, let the Blessing fall	
From a Court-Mistress, or a Priest of Baal.	
From hence, from this corrupted Fountain's Head,	But swoln with wind and the rank mist they draw;
The poyson'd Stream of *Passive Nonsense* spread: . . .	Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread: . . .

The poem concludes with a short history of the Church of England.

This is, perhaps, as ambitious an occasional poem as Nahum ever achieved. It is of a length which is unusual in our poet, and there is a solidarity and a fixity of purpose about it, even in the introductory remarks, which can be found but seldom elsewhere in his work and which may very well be the result of the obvious transfusion of Miltonic blood which he had just undergone. Changing opinions and the mitigation of ancient suspicions and animosities have made many of the lines obscure and much of the phraseology irrelevant, as has been the case with Milton himself; yet the work stands easily as one of the strongest accomplishments in the realm of the poetry of Tate's younger manhood.

The influence of Milton seems to appear again in a pastoral poem published the same year and entitled "A Poem occasioned by His Majesty's Voyage to Holland, the Congress at the Hague, and Present Siege of Mons. . . ." The shepherd Philander dreams that he is carried away to Elysium. There he is met by Cowley, who shows him a vision of all the great poets of England, among them, Milton himself. The other poets are singing the glories of Edward and Henry, the heroes of Crecy and Agincourt, so naturally, Milton sings William and the Boyne (p. 5):

> Behold where *Milton* Bower'd in Laurel Groves.
> A Task beyond his warring Angels moves,
> Himself a Seraph now with sacred flame
> Draws Schemes proportion'd to great *William's* Fame;
> (For Commonwealth no more his Harp he strings,
> By *Nassau's* Virtue Reconcil'd to Kings)
> Ere long the Sacred Numbers He will joyn
> And bring his Heroe thund'ring to the Boyne.

Philander is now given a supplementary vision of William's present and future activities, and a detailed description of the Boyne brings the poem to a close.

The general influence of Milton is marked throughout the work. The whole fiction of the vision of the future is Miltonic, though certainly not only Miltonic, and the direct references indicate that Tate had in mind the great English epic.

The name and work of Milton were further exploited by the

Laureate, in the interests of his ill-starred "Monitor." In the thirteenth number, p. [2], he apologizes for his prosody thus:

> We have presented the Two first Copies in their own Antique Dress, Antiquity in Expression, as well as on Other Accounts, being, on some Persons Sentiments, venerable; and this was our great *Milton's* Persuasion and Practice.

And in a later number (20) Milton's glorious invocation of the Heavenly Muse has been rewritten by a sincere but mediocre man as follows:

Thou sacred Spirit, thou alone,
Who know'st th'Arcana of Heav'n's shining Throne
And with expanded Wing
Sat Brooding on the *Universe,*
Reducing *Chaos* unto Form
And into Amity its Hetrogenial Storm; . . .

And chiefly thou, O Spirit, . . .
. . . thou from the first
Wast present, and with mighty wings outspread
Dove-like sat'st brooding on the vast abyss,
And mad'st it pregnant: . . .

Historically, the moralistic movement took its more immediate rise, like the other movements of the century, in the Renaissance. Against the classical and neo-classical use of the Olympic pantheon in epic and tragedy had come the literary protest of Tasso and of Spenser. The struggle had gone on in France until the all-powerful name of Boileau carried the day—appended to a rationalistic argument that Christianity, with its doctrines of divine justice, repentance, and punishment, was wholly unsuitable for tragic development.

In England, D'Avenant and Cowley espoused the positive side of the question, the former defending his action on utilitarian grounds. Dennis and Dryden followed, Dryden having the temerity to take issue with Boileau, pointing out that in the Christian doctrine of an angelic hierarchy lay a more valuable poetical machinery than the whole supernatural economy of the Greeks. Out of such assertions and the unrecognized influence of Miltonic achievement and argument were developed Dennis's official pronouncements. They were formally rational. Through the fall came a conflict of reason and passion. Christianity reconciled the two, recognizing the passions but seeking to exalt them. Thus it comes into harmony with poetry which seeks the same end. Divine poetry raises the purest and most sublime emotions, and is, accordingly, far in

advance of the more commonplace possibilities of classical themes. Dennis became the leading exponent of the theory, and with the position of Dennis, Tate was heartily in accord. Indeed, his own words, that both morality and religion are material for the best poetry, were set down some five years before the formal declaration of Dennis.[18] Unfortunately, however, Tate never wrote the best poetry; and he never forgot his religion and morality. He could apply the rationalistic method to his morality, but once again it is necessary to keep in mind his highly emotional Irish temperament and his Puritan parentage and discipline. His early work was coloured—or stained—by his overcharged religious poems, and though these were set aside subsequently for the more purely moral projects of the eighties and nineties, the religious note becomes dominant in the version of the *Psalms* and in the poems of 1696. It is marked in his last play (1707), and it culminates in the impossible stuff of the *Monitor,* which is wretched material, badly expressed and comparable only to the worst effusions of Isaac Watts. Whatever views we may hold about the possibility of wedding religious fervour to poetry, Tate was certainly not the one to perform the ceremony, since he had little fervour and less poetry. His work is interesting historically, however, for, strange as it may seem, it was through such humble entrances as these that imagination and feeling were to creep back to their dominant position in the Romantic poetry of the third and fourth generation.

With the social and academic controversy of the day over education, Tate properly had no connection. Sympathetically and socially, however, he belonged to the group which put forward the ideal of the *honnête homme* in opposition to the exponents of a scientific education. In his earlier poems he continually stresses the difficulty and importance of the classics, and all his life he was constantly at work upon his own classical hobbies. Moreover, as time went on, he emphasized morality and culture in education. It was the contention of the scientist that science taught morality and religion and had a distinct

[18] Tate says (Tate, ed., *Miscellanea Sacra; or, Poems on Divine and Moral Subjects,* 1696, 1, p. 1 of Preface): "That Religion and Morality are capable of all the Embellishments of Poetry has been confirmed by the Suffrage and Performance of best Poets in all Ages."

cultural value, but of these reasonable claims Tate has nothing to say. Of the current theories of esthetics, also, he seems to have taken no cognizance.

It is clear, therefore, that Tate was, psychologically, almost entirely out of harmony with the major movements of his own day and generation. It remains to be shown whence he came, whither he was going, and in what manner he paid lip service to the more fashionable and superficial modes of his fellows.

Beside post-Renaissance " orthodox " striving for law and order, there develops a " heterodox " effort to prolong a period actually drawing to a close. Imagination, exhausted by sustained activity, and emotions, jaded and capricious from continual exhilaration, are to be roused to new responses by appeals necessarily artificial and strained. The result is a literature marked by strange and sometimes morbid imagery, comedy which has become sentimental, flushed, and sensational, and tragedy which has moved into the realm of exotic horror and melodrama. As time goes on and literary fabric becomes increasingly fragile, this exotic character becomes more and more pronounced and more and more extreme. The imaginative and emotional response changes, too. Starting out sudden, intense, erratic, it becomes feebler and feebler until the iron hand of the Protector closes the theatres, and the rule of the army takes the attention of the nation. But even in literature imagination never quite dies, emotions are never completely dried up, and after the Restoration they still thread their tortuous and precarious way among the gigantic piles erected by victorious science and rationalism; and behind the " heterodox " stand the people as a whole, never forgetting the spirit of the Renaissance and remaining persistently loyal to the congenial moods of English romanticism.

Tate belongs to this heterodox remnant. His first volume of poems is marked by an irregularity and variety of technique, still partially free of the " tyranny of the couplet." His themes are diversified, and when he has shaken off fashionable modes, his approach is, in intention, mildly emotional and moderately imaginative. His pure lyrics are directly in the succession of Jonson and Herrick. In the drama, after an unsuccessful attempt to meet the recently popular taste for the heroic play,

he turns back to the immediately post-Elizabethan vogue for Shakespeare, Jonson, and Beaumont and Fletcher. In Shakespeare's work he sees a "heap of jewels." *Coriolanus* and *Richard II* are damned because in each he tries to meet the exigencies of an occasion; but in *Lear* he scores a marked success. With the "orthodox" and neo-classical Jonson, he can do but little, his work never rising above the level of poor farce. The "heterodoxy" of Beaumont and Fletcher is more congenial, however, and he revels in the light of its sustained sentiment and colourful trappings. Throughout his career he turns constantly with pleasure to other Elizabethans, working sporadically upon their work; and over all, his emotion and imagination find outlet and scope in the preparation of overcharged and highly coloured religious exercises, which culminate in the imaginative and emotional extravagances of the *Monitor*. Tate is the child of the Renaissance; but he belongs to the third and fourth generation, and in him the once fine pulse of the Elizabethans throbs but feebly. By this time, the pure blood of a golden age has been diluted by many tributary streams.

Like all survivors of that lost generation, however, Tate belongs as much to the future as to the past. His vulgar and bourgeois religious attitude and emotion, engendered though they may have been in the Puritanism of pre-Cromwellian days, point the way to the emotional revival and excesses of the Wesleyan agitation which will shake England and provoke strong repercussions even within the rationalistic and Platonic bosom of the Established Church. His weariness with the town, his nausea at the convention and chicanery of Court life, and his longing for the unaffected modes and simple sincerity of the country [19] may look back to the more spacious days of

[19] "Strephon's Complaint," in *Poems*, 2nd ed., 1684, pp. 70-3:

Business! — Oh stay till I recover Breath,
The dreadful Word puts all my Sense to flight;
Business to me sounds terrible as Death;
. . . . . .
But Business to Preferment will direct,
. . . . . .
Ah! have I then no more than *this* t'expect?
. . . . *Content* I crave,
And wildly you of Greatness rave!
If Life's at best a tedious rugged Road,
What must it be with State's encumbring Load?

a merrier England, but they will be emphasized, magnified, and developed in another generation by the whole tribe of primitivists and semi-primitivists. His benevolent attitude towards his fellows and his ready emotional response to anxiety and unhappiness take their rise in a day which gave light to a Sir Philip Sidney and a Sir Walter Raleigh, but they will flow onward, also, into a society which will have for its ideal a Charles Grandison and a " man of feeling." His melancholy [20] and his preoccupation with death [21] which look back to the ancient civilizations of Greece and of Rome and more immediately to the exotic Robert Burton, will be reflected in Young, Blair, Goldsmith, Gray, and Sam Johnson. In the realm of the drama, he has already helped to undo the rationalistic and cynical work of the Restoration by his constant emotional effort to sentimentalize, purify, and moralize. He has taken his place beside Collier, and has even advanced his own program [22] for the reform of the stage. His last tragedy—never produced, alas (!)—announces an extra-rational moral purpose, and in its emphasis upon a domestic situation and conjugal affections, it is close to the work of Steele, pointing the way to the sentimental theatre which ensued.

> Condem'd to Town, Noise and Impertinence,
> Where *Mode* and *Ceremony* I must view!
> Yet were the Sight all, *Strephon* cou'd dispense;
> But he must there be *Ceremonious* too.

[20] " To a desponding Friend," in *Poems*, 2nd ed., 1684, p. 107:

> Repine not, pensive Friend, to meet
> A Thorn and Sting in every Sweet;
> Think it not yours, or my hard Fate,
> But the fixt Lot of Humane State.

" Disappointed," in *ibid.*, pp. 76-7:

> From Clime to Clime with restless Toyl we Roam,
> But sadly still our old Griefs we retain,
> And with us bear beyond the spacious Main
> The same unquiet *selves* we brought from Home!

" The Search," in *ibid.*, pp. 21-6:

> Ev'n in this vale of Misery,
> Some Rivulets of Bliss we taste;
> But Rivulets half *dry*,
> And *tainted* with the *Soil* through which they past.

[21] See p. 259, n. 13, above.

[22] [Tate], *A Proposall for Regulating of the Stage and Stage-Plays*, Lambeth MS. 933, no. 57, The Gibson MS.

It is now evident that historically and psychologically Tate's connection with the major intangible movements of the Restoration and post-Restoration periods is a slender one. The past and the future were his, but the present belonged to others. With the more superficial and fluctuating fashionable tastes of society, however, the relation is a much more direct and manifold one. For Tate was to his very finger-tips a thoroughgoing and unrepentant opportunist—he had to be! Within the realm of the drama, coming into the field late, he first modelled his work upon that of the successful exponents of the popular heroic manner. Failing here, he turned to the recently increased vogue for adaptations from Shakespeare. His first adaptation is a success, but two subsequent failures drive him into discipleship to Ravenscroft, whose successful farces must have made the hungry mouth of the poverty-stricken playwright to water copiously. The second time he tastes both victory and defeat before he turns to the third hope of the Restoration, Beaumont and Fletcher. Two successes and six failures turn him away from the stage until a new and definitely moral Sovereign, Queen Anne, and a changed taste in society seem, after the lapse of twenty years, to point the way to a late triumph. His efforts in the realms of poetry and of journalism are similar. He sets aside the pure lyrics and the prosody which seems to have come most natural to him, he shackles himself with the heroic couplet and tries his hand at all the fashionable and unfashionable exercises of the day, at everything that seems to hold out the slightest prospect of monetary remuneration—occasional poems, translations, pastorals, satire, collections, paraphrases, prologue, epilogue, magazines, and journals, the historical, scientific, neo-classical, moral and religious modes, personal joys and sorrows—with anxious hope and wistful longing, but without intelligent discrimination, all are exploited shamelessly for what they will bring in pounds, shillings, and pence. The man is tired, the work is uncongenial, recognition is slow, and life becomes a burden. Yet he does not dare to rest—he cannot afford to. His work becomes superficial, journalistic, objective, dull, without sparkle and animation, but from time to time it does meet the popular demand, and with opportune assistance from Dorset, and the royal pen-

sion, it does serve the purpose of keeping body and soul together for over thirty years. Literature, indeed, proved for him a bad crutch.[23]

It is not surprising, therefore, that he should have been almost entirely neglected by critics and historians, or referred to only with expressions of pity and contempt. The faithful Dunton was found to praise him; one, Pittis, and a few others were equally well disposed; but all the great men scorned him. Pope refers to him with characteristic satire:

Dunciad, 1. 105:

> She saw slow Philips creep like Tate's poor page,

Ibid., 238:

> O! pass more innocent, in infant state,
> To the mild limbo of our father Tate

Epistle to Doctor Arbuthnot, lines 179-90:

> The bard whom pilfered Pastorals renown,
> Who turns a Persian tale for half a crown,
> Just writes to make his barrenness appear,
> And strains from hard-bound brain, eight lines a year;
> He, who still wanting, though he lives on theft,
> Steals much, spends little, yet has nothing left:
> And he, who now to sense, now nonsense leaning,
> Means not, but blunders round about a meaning:
> And he, whose fustian's so sublimely bad,
> It is not poetry, but prose run mad:
> All these, my modest satire bade translate,
> And owned that nine such poets made a Tate.

Swift employs delightful irony (*The Tale of a Tub,* "Dedication to Prince Posterity"):

There is another, called Nahum Tate, who is ready to make oath,

[23] "The Match," in *Poems,* 2nd ed., 1684, pp. 66-7:

> By what wild Frenzy was I led,
> That with a *Muse* I must needs wed?
> Whose *Dow'r consists of empty Fame,*
> Yet with that Trouble and Debate
> The owner holds this poor Estate;
> Where after long Expence and Toil
> He *starves* on the ungrateful Soil.
> The Fields and Groves which Poets feign
> The curious Fancy entertain,
> But yields no timely Grain or Fruit,
> The craving Stomach to recruit.

that he has caused many reams of verse to be published, whereof both himself and his bookseller (if lawfully required) can still produce authentic copies, and therefore wonders why the world is pleased to make such a secret of it.

Southey is content to mention him thus in passing (*Life of Cowper*, pp. 293-4) :

> Nahum Tate, who of all my predecessors must have ranked lowest of the laureates, — if he had not succeeded Shadwell, — adapted Coriolanus, Richard the Second, and King Lear to his own notions of dramatic propriety . . . poor Nahum may be excused for fancying that he could fit Shakespeare's tragedies to the stage.

Macaulay only damns with faint praise (*Critical and Miscellaneous Essays* 4. 28) :

> Had he [Wycherley] devoted himself to the making of verse, he would have been nearly as far below Tate and Blackmore as Tate and Blackmore are below Dryden.

These and a few similar meager comments, tell all that contemporaries and posterity have thought of poor Nahum Tate. That he was a poverty-stricken man lacking physical vigour and wanting great talents, and that he spent his life in an almost vain and heart-breaking pursuit of popular favour, without pride, self-respect, or dignity, it is useless to deny. The evidence appears on nearly every page that he has written. But it is less than good sportmanship to vilify him for his physical and intellectual limitations, whatever these may have been, and poverty often entails the sacrifice of an appropriate independence and self-esteem. Moreover, his actual place in the world of letters is not a totally insignificant one. He had the honour of collaborating more than once with Dryden, the greatest man of letters of his age; he prepared a version of *King Lear* which took precedence in the theatre over Shakespeare's own version for more than a hundred and fifty years; and with Doctor Brady, he furnished the National Church with a version of the *Psalms* which was still in use in the days of our grandfathers. The history of an age is never adequately told by an examination of only its outstanding men. Conclusions can never be accurate when they are based upon preconceived notions and a deductive method. It is only when an age

is seen singly and whole that evaluation can be intelligent and discriminating, and then it will be found that obscure and despised third-rate individuals are sometimes of greater significance than more brilliant and energetic men, who, shaped only by popular fashions, move constantly in the limelight. The brilliant and reckless carnival of the Restoration, with its Etherege and its Wycherley, its Shadwell and its Congreve, went on to a close, and with the passing of the gay regalia, the loud trumpets, and the witty chatter, came the sound of the stiller and smaller voices of men like Tate, humble but not entirely insignificant links in the long chain of English literature, firmly attached to the more enduring elements which had gone before and reaching forward, also, to a new day which should carry out and bring to completion the slower, more thoughtful, and therefore, more permanent, developments in the language and literature which they had helped to mould and to create.

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